

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for use in a ~~cable~~ television network to provide public, educational and governmental (PEG) programming ~~pursuant to an agreement with a local franchising authority for a local area,~~ the method comprising:

providing a PEG channel in a channel lineup for a [[the]] local area ~~in accordance with the local franchising authority agreement;~~

providing backdrop programming on the PEG channel, ~~the backdrop programming being general local interest programming provided by the cable television network;~~

determining an availability of locally produced PEG programming; and

responsive to determining that ~~when~~ the locally produced PEG programming is available and intended for local transmission ~~broadcast,~~ unconditionally preempting the backdrop programming and providing the locally produced PEG programming on the PEG channel ~~thereby providing the locally produced PEG programming against a backdrop of general local interest programming provided by the cable television network.~~

2. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1 wherein the locally produced PEG programming is created via local public access to the ~~cable~~ television network.

3. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1 wherein the locally produced PEG programming is created via educational access to the ~~cable~~ television network.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1 wherein the locally produced PEG programming is created via local governmental access to the ~~cable~~ television network.

5. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1 wherein the ~~cable~~ television network encompasses a plurality of local areas, wherein (PEG) programming is provided on the PEG channel to the ~~[[a]]~~ local area ~~pursuant to an agreement with a corresponding local franchising authority,~~ and wherein the backdrop programming ~~general local interest programming~~ is provided on PEG channels for multiple local areas.

6. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1 wherein the ~~cable~~ television network includes a video on demand (VOD) platform, the VOD platform including a library of locally produced PEG programming, the method further comprising:

providing locally produced PEG programming on demand with the VOD platform, wherein the locally produced PEG programming on demand is selectable by a subscriber.

7. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 1 wherein the ~~cable~~ television network includes a high speed data (HSD) platform, the HSD platform including a library of locally produced PEG programming, the method further comprising:

providing locally produced PEG programming on demand with the HSD platform, wherein the locally produced PEG programming on demand is selectable by a subscriber.

8. **(Currently Amended)** A method for use in a ~~cable~~ television network to provide public, educational and governmental (PEG) programming ~~pursuant to agreements with local franchising authorities for local areas~~, the method comprising:

providing a PEG channel in the channel lineup for each local area ~~as required by the corresponding local franchising authority agreement~~;

providing backdrop programming on each PEG channel, ~~the backdrop programming being general local interest programming provided by the cable television network~~;

for each local area having a PEG channel, determining an availability of locally produced PEG programming; and

responsive to determining that ~~when~~ the locally produced PEG programming is available and intended for local transmission ~~broadcast~~ in a particular local area having the PEG channel, unconditionally preempting the backdrop programming and providing the locally produced PEG programming on the PEG channel in the particular local area ~~thereby providing the locally produced PEG programming against a backdrop of general local interest programming provided by the cable television network~~.

9. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 8 wherein the locally produced PEG programming is created via local public access to the ~~eable~~ television network.

10. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 8 wherein the locally produced PEG programming is created via educational access to the ~~eable~~ television network.

11. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 8 wherein the locally produced PEG programming is created via local governmental access to the ~~eable~~ television network.

12. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 8 wherein the backdrop programming ~~general local interest programming~~ is provided on PEG channels for multiple local areas.

13. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 8 wherein the ~~eable~~ television network includes a video on demand (VOD) platform, the VOD platform including a library of locally produced PEG programming, the method further comprising:

providing locally produced PEG programming on demand with the VOD platform, wherein the locally produced PEG programming on demand is selectable by a subscriber.

14. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 8 wherein the ~~eable~~ television network includes a high speed data (HSD) platform, the HSD platform including a library of locally produced PEG programming, the method further comprising:

providing locally produced PEG programming on demand with the HSD platform, wherein the locally produced PEG programming is selectable by a subscriber.

15. **(Currently Amended)** An apparatus for signal distribution in a ~~eable~~ television network comprising:

an interface that is configured to receive backdrop programming ~~general local interest content~~ from a first source and to receive locally produced content from a second source; and

a processing module configured to be connected to the interface and configured to perform:

providing a channel in a channel lineup for a [[the]] local area ~~in accordance with the local franchising authority agreement;~~

providing the backdrop programming on the channel, ~~the backdrop programming comprising the general local interest content~~ from the first source;

determining an availability of the locally produced content from the second source; and

responsive to determining that ~~when~~ the locally produced content is available and intended for local transmission ~~broadcast~~, unconditionally preempting the backdrop programming and providing the locally produced content on the channel ~~to provide locally produced programming against a backdrop of general local interest programming provided by the cable television network.~~

16. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 15, wherein:

the interface is configured to connect to a video on demand (VOD) platform, the VOD platform including a library of locally produced programming; and

the processing module is further configured to perform:

providing locally produced programming on demand with the VOD platform, the locally produced programming on demand being selectable by a subscriber.

17. **(Previously Presented)** The apparatus of claim 15, wherein:

the interface is configured to connect to a high speed data (HSD) platform, the HSD platform including a library of locally produced PEG programming; and

the processing module is further configured to perform:

providing the locally produced PEG programming on demand with the HSD platform, the locally produced PEG programming on demand being selectable by a subscriber.

18. **(Currently Amended)** A method for use in a ~~cable~~ television network ~~to provide programming pursuant to an agreement with a local franchising authority for a local area,~~ the method comprising:

providing a channel in a channel lineup for a [[the]] local area ~~in accordance with the local franchising authority agreement;~~

providing backdrop programming on the channel, ~~the backdrop programming being general local interest programming provided by the cable television network;~~

determining an availability of locally produced programming; and

responsive to determining that ~~when~~ the locally produced programming is available and intended for local transmission ~~broadcast~~, unconditionally preempting the backdrop programming and providing the locally produced programming on the channel ~~thereby providing the locally produced programming against a backdrop of general local interest programming provided by the cable television network.~~

19. **(Currently Amended)** A method for use in a cable television network ~~to provide programming pursuant to agreements with local franchising authorities for local areas,~~ the method comprising:

providing a channel in the channel lineup for each local area ~~as required by the corresponding local franchising authority agreement;~~

providing backdrop programming on each channel, ~~the backdrop programming being general local interest programming provided by the cable television network;~~

for each local area having a channel, determining an availability of locally produced programming; and

responsive to determining that ~~when~~ the locally produced programming is available and intended for local transmission ~~broadcast~~ in a particular local area having the channel, unconditionally preempting the backdrop programming and providing the locally produced programming on the channel in the particular local area ~~thereby providing the locally produced programming against a backdrop of general local interest programming provided by the cable television network.~~